

In The Service Of Truth

Or (“The Agent’s Guide ToThe Library On Venus”)

By Thomas Park

Truth is not a static object, a non-moving field. The Platonists talk about a place where everything is perfect and ideal. But these are the Forms, they are not the truth. Truth is, well- it's alive. It moves, it makes noise. It's a bit like a gigantic centipede with pincers that chitter, demanding food. Sometimes I am part of truth, and when I am, I intend to serve it.

Don't ask why.

This summer, 2020, of which 18 July is the date, was an historic summer. Of course, so were all before. But this one-- it was strange.

Pandemics aren't really supposed to matter. I think that they result in some scary graphics-- a panel is formed-- a few unfortunates pass away, and along we go. And this flu, Covid-19, isn't especially fatal. There is, I believe, something like a 3% fatality rate. Yet, many, many, many have become sick with the virus and quite a few have died.

Adding to the picture is a peaking racial tension. A police officer had the brilliant and ethical notion to kneel on a poor African American man's neck until he died. All this before a small group of meandering people, some of whom had cameras. The pictures weren't pretty, and the protests that followed approached riots in some areas.

One more prominent piece of the puzzle is an American President who is deemed by some as a great savior and by the majority as not only lacking in morals, but, worse, in intelligence. I keep telling them you can't be a politician and really have morals, but no one listens.

I could write about zombies, but I am pretty sure they are fictional. For sure I have noticed a few people with that far-away gaze, the one that had been noticed in war veterans. This suggests that traumas private and public are happening. I do believe that. Many are not unemployed, with little to do but snack away their savings while reading about Covid in their Facebook feeds. And the gaze, gradually-- fixes on the horizon. There it remains.

However, this is all so straightforward, and I said I was in the service of truth. And so, I must enter the realm of science fiction.

Reality is formed by a network of agents. We are all agents, nearly all of us. Even your mother is an agent-- if she is like mine, she craves love, and operates to get it. Furthermore, we have known nothing about political truth of any substance since about the time of the Vietnam War, perhaps before.

While President Johnson's administration was telling our country that we were winning Vietnam, an entire generation of young men were over there serving missions that often seemed irrational, dubious at best. There was a great cost in suffering and human life, and there has never been a place and time where more happened but less will ever be discussed.

Unlike what the President told everyone, a complete screw-up. A catastrophe.

Those lucky enough to return home were treated with contempt, as though their often unchosen service was their decision. Trust me, that place was not under their control. Vietnam was never ruled or controlled by American soldiers.

Speaking of agents, a major thread begins-- why did we fight that awful war? The line we are to believe is that it was for freedom. But the more we look into things the hazier that seems. Freedom for whom and in what way? What seems more likely is that some international power conglomerate existed, which perhaps persists to this day. The war was to serve the interests of this conglomerate.

Not too long ago, our dis-respected President made a daring statement. He told his cabinet that we were going to leave the war in Afghanistan, declaring it a victory. His logic was that trillions in funds and worse tens of thousands of lives had been lost, some American. His cabinet and advisors promptly recommended he not pursue the withdrawal, and to this day we have not been told why-- but the answer was really there all along.

Agents. Agents of vast, international powers.

Of course, I am also an agent, and perhaps one of the worst. I am an agent who is trying to tell you the truth. And sooner or later, I will get tired of telling it. I have my own motivations. I want you to respect me, and I want you to respect my opinion. That is partly because I have been

diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, and there are many people who might be inclined not to believe in what I write. International conspiracies? I would be lucky if I could tie my shoe.

I can tie my shoe just fine.

Agents have special ways to communicate with one another. Many years ago, there was a special postal service known as the Tristero. More recently, various codes and forms have been used, including email and social networking. I thought about composing this whole thing on a social network, but I realized that people might take that the wrong way, and, frankly, I don't want Facebook or anyone else to censor me.

You see, some of these issues are private. On top of being an agent with special insight, I am having intimacy issues with my wife. T. is a good woman. Imperfect, but good. She tries hard, she needs love. My illness, perhaps, together with my duties as an agent hit our relationship the hardest. The only song she knows on the piano is Madonna's "Crazy For You". Isn't that enough? Can't I give her a better intimate life?

Sure everything looks good on paper. Not great, but good. We have a house that we love. It's very spacious and comfortable inside with wooden floors. In it, we live, austere, what otherwise is a Bohemian dream. We have a work of real minimalism over our gigantic television. We have two friendly cats. Lots of light comes in this place, and it is safe and friendly. And it is rated PG, not really even as racy as "Poltergeist" the movie.

Fine, if one is an agent. And I am one. A lack of intimacy is a normal problem for agents. They have other kinds of duties, such as serving the Truth. It is sadly easy to serve the Truth enough that the other problem gets ignored. But, sooner or later, the wife makes a connection between serving the Truth and her lack of pleasure. She starts showing up near the transmitter, wanting to know what I am sending the other agents.

The more she learns about the conspiracy, the less she is interested. I didn't even try to tell her about the secret postal service. I knew she would grunt softly and keep doing whatever she was doing.

That's my wife T. all over.

I spend my time here as an agent with some risk then, you see-- risk to my own welfare, to my very normal lack of intimacy. Yet, I choose to come here as an agent, because as a person who can serve the Truth, I feel I have a special talent. Yes, I think I just might be one of the world's better agents, if you give me a chance. That is because I am an honest agent, and those are rare nowadays. And I am honest to a purpose-- that you and I achieve a sense of mutual peace. Yes, in spite of all of the rabble-rousing, the goal is to find peace. And a certain agency.

At this point, I should let you know about differences between agents. There are agents who work to assemble a sort of library of media and information. And there are those who work to make sure that such libraries never happen. You might call the agents, then, Pine and Spruce. Pine agents try to add more information to the pool of what we know, and Spruce agents try to avoid that, sometimes even destroying information as it exists.

If all agents were Pine agents, we would know more about what happened in Vietnam.

One of my early calls to duty was a transmission from Venus, to create a large collection of music for a library there. Laboring as a musician, I have used equipment such as field recording devices, contact microphones and shortwave devices to collect literally thousands of recordings. In fact, I am approaching having collected 10000 recordings. This particular mission was what first made me an agent, though to this day I am not entirely sure about the purpose behind it.

Perhaps the aliens need a sort of survey of the kinds of sounds available here on this planet. I happen to know that it is as H.P. Lovecraft suggested-- that they are of the insect-like form, with rugose cones for heads. These aliens are taking part in a huge intergalactic survey of sounds and culture, and I am simply one of many Earthbound agents supplying them with material.

The problems with T. have not been helped by this mission. Like with the Tristero and the transmitter, it seemed that the more I described to T., for example, the use of a contact microphone and how it operates, the less interested she became. At one point, things came to a head, when I admitted that I took this mission somewhat personally, after all of the painstaking effort put in. In response, T. replied that it was 'Just not her kind of thing'.

So here I am serving the aliens, with their presumed survey, nearly every day. And I know so very little about it. In a way I am like K. from Kafka's "The Castle", who arrives at a castle and a town and cannot beyond that ascertain what part he might possibly play.

Life can have the quality of a Kafka-esque dream, for sure- the recurring characters, too, and the very ordinary quality of things that suddenly seems dark and surreal.

Not too many Spruce agents have interfered with my sound mission. My mother revealed herself as such an agent when recommending I focus on other things than the music. Sometimes, something will happen-- an external drive will undergo an error, my transmitter a virus, or such, which makes me believe that the Spruce agents are hard at work sending rays at my devices from their void machines.

T. has ended up in service of the Spruce agents, I think without meaning to. I know she would never knowingly join the Spruce side-- she is too much a lover of information. She practically reads entire NPR broadcasts to me, sometime, start to finish. Clearly meant to be an agent of the Pine.

A couple of years ago, T. began planting a rather exceptional garden in our backyard. She paid a lot of money to have local Missouri plants and flowers planted there. The first year, not much came up, but by now, the third year, there are quite a few plants-- it's a veritable ecosystem unto itself. Birds, butterflies, big fat bumblebees-- they all enjoy habiting T's garden.

But there is a Spruce agent threat afoot, as my time is often called to assist with the garden. I was clear from the get-go that this was T's venture, and that as a Pine agent (of course I did not say that), she was in charge both of getting it started and upkeep. It is in her weaker moments that she begins to assume I can take time from my duties as an agent to do things like work with her to pull weeds for several hours in the sun.

Obviously, she does not understand the importance of my agent duties.

That being said, few do. I shared a bit about some newer sound protocol for my sound mission, and some discoveries I had made, and my Father-In-Law, otherwise a very kind man, actually scoffed at me. I was referring to the self-composition protocol.

Several years ago, transmission to my brain informed me that, without further training and discipline, I would not be able to continue as an agent. I did not want to limit my agency to collecting sounds for the Venusians, so I took a class involving coding.

Happily, I found that my mind was good at coding, and met some possibly agent-types in the class, besides.

I began taking the coding out of class and created a program that would interact with a gigantic library of media, allowing me to search through it topically.

As my coding skills developed, there were some moments of hesitation.

At one point, I realized that I could create a code through which the machine would, itself, treat random selections from a body of sounds, and loop them so that I could record the result. The result was-- well-- quite musical, in a loop-based sense, and somewhere in the ballpark(s) of minimalists Terry Riley and Steve Reich.

Although I had some reservations about enacting this kind of code, feeling I might simply phase myself (as musician) out this way, in regards to the Venusian project especially, I created the code anyway. I now have a digital console that, with a little setup, can be made endlessly to create its own music.

This is the protocol my Father-In-Law scoffed at.

What he does not know is that this is quite likely part of a newer mission, possibly from the same Venusians who motivated H.P. Lovecraft to share his insights about the cosmos and worlds of dream.

A little aside about this agency. My agency is bigger than myself, and my status as a Pine agent depends a lot on my situation in the body of Believers. If the Believers sanction both my identity as an agent and my desire to communicate about this identity, then and only then can the Truth be served. Otherwise, I will stumble back and forth, and trust me, we will get nowhere.

So that's something, eh? Not only am I giving you the details of my agent status, but in doing so I am marshalling the powers and willingness of a larger body of Believers.

The self-creating musical mission, or part of it, was recently revealed to me. I often go on for months and even years without knowing. I was exposed to a thinker who found consciousness in unusual places-- plants, rocks, even inert matter. This thinker has not been accepted widely in the West, though there are those who find him to be important.

I bring up the idea of Pantheism. Pantheists believe that God not only expresses Himself in nature, but that God is present in nature. By my thought, if God inhabits this world, he might also inhabit a computer, or its processor.

In other words, it was made clear to me that I was in pursuit of and meant to try and find the music of God-- one expressed as He would, as He does through the beauty of trees, plants, flowers, insects.

Nature we might say is a system that existed before we came along, and it was a solvent system. Every element of nature fit it with the other elements and with the whole. Without Man's interference, nature represents a system more complex and beautiful than we might ever imagine.

The closest we come to this kind of system might be, for example, a family. Perhaps some loving families work well together, mirror, in fact, the beauty of nature.

Generative music, too, provides connections. What I have discovered about this mission is that, as long as the sound choices I made fit in with one another as nature does-- i.e. the parts work with each other and as a whole, then the music created with this Generative/Iterative code sounds like good music to the human ear. If there are elements in the system that stick out or are not musical, these elements cause the compositions(s) to fail.

Perhaps this sheds light on what it means to be an agent of the Pine, that our amassing of information and culture should be done in an inspired way, so that the elements work well with

one another. The collections should be organic, and iterable. They should cross-reference, and make sense in terms of the entire collection.

There is a big risk in being an agent, that being Death. When death strikes, if the collection(s) amassed are not in shape, there is a good chance that they will remain unfinished, incomplete. This knowledge tends to haunt agents like me such that I insist on saving and backing up my elements as soon as they are created, even during the process.

Some believe in a certain type of bomb which, if detonated over the United States, would cause all digital memory to be erased. Maybe that is part of the reason so many of us started saving our work(s) in the cloud, in spite of privacy risks. We wanted to be sure that even a natural catastrophe would not interfere with our agent duties. As you can see, there have been some pretty devoted agents in history-- and, of course, there have also been Spruce agents working against them.

Take, for example, Charles Schulz. The inventor of the “Peanuts” comic has become a recognizable contributor to Western culture, This is true even though Schulz created very simple, almost pristine comics, with just a few characters. Schulz’ characters are well-loved by many now.

Back in the day, it is said that Schulz placed a great deal of importance in his Peanuts comic. He had an upstairs studio and would spend many hours a day there, working hard to make things perfect. His family was less supportive, and would tease and even chasten Schulz for his efforts. In response, he became predatorily fixated on the comic. He realized its importance in

mass culture, and would not let it go. This fixation happened in spite of love, intimacy, leisure and other lifestyle temptations. Schulz denied himself nearly all of these to become the agent we know him as-- the creator of characters such as "Snoopy", "Woodstock" and "Charlie Brown".

That all seems silly, a person might think. A cartoon is just a cartoon. But the interests of the Venusian librarians are hazy at best, and sometimes simple transmissions such as these can be very valuable to them. I can't but imagine that the Venusians enjoy(ed) Gary Larson's "The Far Side" comics, as well.

And so let's consider this. If the Spruce agents had had their way, had been victorious, Charles Schulz might have lived to be, for example, a happy and fulfilled Father. He might have had many great moments with his real, flesh-and-blood family. Maybe there was even a real "Snoopy" who he loved and could have played with. In this way, the Spruce agents appear not to be all that bad. Why not just live life as it is? What's with all of the conflict and drama?

Other times, they can be quite nefarious. One of the worst parts of the Spruce agent agenda is the "Nothing Is" clause. The Nothing Is clause states that culture is nothing much more than a cancerous mishap, a thought mistake, leading to more and more error. All of tragedy, all comedy-- none was meant to be, only us, each other, and the Void. Aside from ourselves, it is the Void we serve, bringing things again and again to nothingness.

I might imagine the Void of the Spruce agent as resembling the monoliths in Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey". They appear divinely potent, possibly dangerous, and affect things that touch them in strange ways. The monoliths, or pieces of Void, become elements in their own system,

though which nothing can be and so is again and again, until Man ends up aging in solitude, dining solo in his own nightmarish isolation chamber.

It's Spruce agency, that's for sure, and for one thing it does not admit that 2001 itself has been added to the Pine agent's library of media, and is a significant element of it, as it demonstrates the seductive power and appeal of the Spruce agents' Void service.

Now and then it is revealed I have come into contact with, I believe, a higher Pine agent. I will call this person "The Poet". Upon meeting him, he had already understood his mission, nearly in totality, and even recognized his influences. His own elements had been published, and his lifestyle had been changed to adapt to his status as a Pine agent.

When I perused the Earthbound copies of The Poet's works, I was made aware that he was able to use language and ideas to draw connections between things. There was a great mystery to the way he presented himself-- he was the god and creator of his own poetry, but also an agent who had been persecuted by the Spruce agents, and deemed mentally ill (like myself).

Hence he was a narrator, a poetic voice, both easily trusted and infinitely to be questioned. But I suggest to you that the questioning comes from the dark side, and that those who write The Poet off as sick are in the service of the Void, or one of Her Monoliths. The Poet is, after all, an approachable agent and one who has taken much effort to economically and accurately share his elements with the insects of Venus.

When I tried to generate my own element using The Poet, a documentary film, there was an odd occurrence. The film appeared more to be about my own, less poetic, view of the world than of Himself and His. Only fragments of The Poet came through on film-- how, in passing, he easily joked with an admirer. An occasional turn of phrase or confession. The way he looked, with some resignation, at the camera between phrases.

I had made attempts to convert this agency to other technological means and improved lifestyles, but his routine is so tailored towards his own Poesy that all attempts have failed and I more and more need to back off. The Poet, you see, has risen in my esteem to being an essential part of his world and environment, and an agent capable of interpreting this organic relationship into words, which are themselves often quite touching and human. It would be no great surprise to me if The Poet was not a great favorite amongst the Venusian librarians.

Perhaps we will get back to the connections(s) which exist between The Poet, a higher-level agent, and myself, the Musician and Sound-Recordist. There were some forays by The Poet into the world of sound, with music of guitar, voice and harmonica, and these were different than those created by the musician, but quite welcome. They helped to restore in the musician a sense that the Pine agent can add a spirit, an esprit, to his or her duties, and that this can become a part of their agency, of their elements, and also a powerful antidote to the Voids of the Spruce agent(s).

Another run-in with a superior Pine agent involved The Uncle. As with any Pine agent, the Uncle's activities had been often mocked, derided and ignored by the Dark Side. This was especially true due to the fact that The Uncle chose to transmit his elements across a wide and

sometimes aloof readership. That is to say, rather than rendering his elements fit for the great Intergalactic Library of Venus, and transmitting them directly TO Venus, he compiled periodic missives involving these elements and sent them to EARTHBOUND ENTITIES.

The Uncle was devoted to the conversion of all agents to the Pine agent badge. His transmissions, I privately realized, were an indirect attempt to coerce non-agents into taking to the field, picking up the flag. Additionally, The Uncle had amassed such a sheer mass of elemental material, that it dwarfed even mine. Many subjects were touched, especially history. It would come as no surprise to me if The Uncle's contributions to the Venusian libraries solely in the realm of U.S. military history were unique and unparalleled-- indeed, he must be a hero to the Venusian librarians by now. His portrait, no doubt, hangs in a crystal cavern of Venus.

As for our meeting, The Uncle, so far along in his Pine agent status, neither noticed nor acknowledged my works in the sound and music fields. Rather, he promptly began sharing his deep knowledge of his own military history elements, which he peppered with occasional tales of personal wit and charm. I can certainly attest that, had I not already been an agent of the Pine, I would have immediately converted to being one in his presence, if not for a long period of time, then at least while I was with him.

As for the Spruce agency, The Uncle spoke nothing of it. He must have been aware of the hordes of sardonic and sinister agents wanting more than anything to cancel out his culture, void his elements, and eclipse his position as powerful Pine agent. He was of such determination and pristine demeanor, and perhaps as well was showing his understanding of

strategy and military history, such that he batted nary an eyelid in the direction of the Spruce agency.

One effect of spending time with such a figure is that any threats from the Void agents seem to retreat. The man's elements speak for themselves, securing both himself and his family a bulkhead of information protecting them from the roaring nihil. So influential was this figure to me that I began to set aside my own elements, for the time being. Actually, that was more a necessity in that he was not interested so much in them.

Sadly, because his Earthbound transmissions were so often derided by agents of the dark, I fear that when The Uncle passes, many of his elements will persist only on Venus. That is to say, NO EARTHLY CHRONICLE was made of The Uncle's steadfast transmissions in the lines of U.S. Military History-- No, none at all. We must take a moment then, I think, silently contemplating the great impatient rashness of our Spruce-agent tainted culture, and in contrast, the great patience, infinite wisdom and ultimate superiority of that of Venus.

No record of The Uncle would be complete without mention being made of The Mother. The Mother, as it has been mentioned, was later identified as a Spruce agent. It would only be fair to tell her story, and therefore to arrive at justifications for why this might have been the case.

The Mother, as a child, was often eclipsed by the Glory of The Uncle, who, a Pine agent growing in power, received all accolades and praise from The Grand Parents. The Mother was quite saddened to play second fiddle, herself being quite bright and more than a bit able.

Indeed The Mother embarked in a great Rise To Ascendancy in the Pine forces, becoming a teacher. Not just a teacher. The Mother was a true role-model for the Pine agents, inviting people in to the love and collection of knowledge who might have been excluded, such as, African Americans, homosexuals, and other folk considered to be off-center for whatever reason.

And so as the years passed, The Mother amassed a great Army of Pine agents, who, as a group, paid tribute to her teaching skills and love of culture, creating change after change in the world around them.

One effect all of this Pine magic had on The Mother was that, sadly, it began to tire her. A woman has a few children, perhaps, not 10,000, and she could sense this. Her students were not really her children.

She wanted to retire from the Pine service and engage in, what I choose to believe, would have been neutral pastimes. A love of nature and the home, domestic tranquility, perhaps cooking a meal or petting a farm cat.

What The Mother might not have foreseen was that the Spruce agency can be quite seductive, indeed. It can take effect even when a powerful Pine agent is only resting, only recreating. Over many years, the Void service of the Spruce Agents began to have an effect on The Mother, who, by then, had grown blind to the amount and kind of change she herself had caused, to the many elements transmitted to Venus that had been broadcast by her students.

She became, then, a quite complex figure-- somewhat of a servant of the Void, but with the kindness and manners of the Pine agent. This resulted and results, admittedly, in much confusion in her Son (myself), who seeks regularly to remind her of her Pine agent duties, only to be rebuffed, and told no such thing should ever have been or will, due to the great immutable Void.

Although tears have been shed for The Mother, attempts are made to, simply, remember her indirect yet powerful contributions to the Pine badge, to the many who came to knowledge under her tutelage, and not to give her too much trouble for the fatigue, pain and cynicism of her later years. She is, perhaps, to be appreciated as a great resource and not criticized for any weakness(es) she might engender.

Then again, I am biased.

On the subject of biases, we have The Father. The Father throws a bit of a wrench into this entire model-- ie Pine agent versus Spruce, library on Venus, and so forth. It took me many years to discover how and why this was the case. At first, I mistakenly concluded that The Father was simply an agent of the Spruce. He believed in peace, yes, but it was a peace that had to be enforced. It was the rather forced silence of the Kansan plain, the awkward but inevitable swallow of the MidWestern farmer stomaching a cold cup of Maxwell House.

I was to find the error in my ways, as it appeared that he had, in spite of such non-Pine affiliations, contributed in his own indirect way to the Pine cause through the education of his

children. My sister and I were the first to receive this knowledge and training, and years later there was a third, who did, as well.

Therefore, any contributions I might make to the Venusian library might be traced in some way back to him.

But here is the thing. He would not have approved of them, nor placed any importance or stock in such a library. His mission was to create agents of the Pine, but he had himself no direct Pine affiliation.

The anomaly was resolved when I realized he was another kind of agent-- an Agent of Vast International Powers. It was his agency that, albeit in a Post-Vietnam era, was one that actually determined political events on Earth. What we can't know about current events on this planet, he can.

His ways, then remain somewhat of a mystery to me, and his connection with the Pine badge seems to remain that his offspring become involved with it, or perhaps, in a more oblique fashion, the events he is aware of and contributes to on an international scale feed into what, for example, The Uncle, might call elements of U.S. military history.

Perhaps you are beginning to guess my purpose-- or does it remain yet hazy? I have described some personal experiences with the Pine agency, and certain key figures in my life. You would be right to think that I would like to enlist your assistance with the Pine agency. If you serve the dark, and mock my efforts, what indeed are they worth? If you don't react at all, then, again, why

are we wasting time here? Am I simply enhancing your vocabulary? There are those who are better than me at that.

I am not asking you to raid a castle, I don't want you to shoot an arrow at a dragon. Rather, I am asking you to join me in contributing to the library on Venus, which will serve as an Intergalactic history of this period on Earth. If you search your intuition, you may have received certain broadcasts pertaining to this service. Urges to write, draw or paint. Inclinations to share your creations with others.

These were all broadcast to your cerebellum by the Venusians. They need their help. Fewer and fewer Earth agents are here keeping permanent records of cultural phenomena, and our world's cultures, nature, and other aspects are shifting with ever-more velocity. It is said that the Native Americans would consider our modern life to be "out of balance". We need to keep track of it, reflect on it. It's important to observe if we are repeating history, and if so, in what ways. The Pine service can help share this knowledge with, at first, the community of the Solar System, and eventually, with the Intergalactic community.

Be aware that, if you enlist with the Pine, you will likely secure this advantage of the connection with Venus. With practice, and eventually, your portrait may join my Uncle's in the crystal caves. This may not happen immediately, unless you show prodigal ability. Never fear. Great things can be achieved with practice, and soon, tomes of your elements will sit with the others, humming softly away in Venus' libraries.

Those who choose to serve the Void, I wish to address you. If the Spruce comes to challenge the Pine, or finds these elements before they are secure on Venus. Your mode is a tempting one, and many have fallen for its various allure. To suggest that all is naught is, as we continue to age, more and more of a normal conclusion. Yet, as we look back, I think with honesty, we can all see that there were bright lights leading us through most if not all of our difficulties.

These, as Madeleine L'Engle writes, were the luminaries, be they artists, teachers, poets, philosophers, leaders. If we have fallen to true darkness, then we have erroneously pushed these lights aside. If, finally, we completely serve the Void, or nihil, we fallaciously assert there be no need for them.

What to do, then, when knowledge is required, is needed? When a strange rash appears on the ankle, or the eye swells and turns red? What to think of the strange music we might hear at a restaurant? How to learn a trade, skill, or craft? How, indeed, to pass the many upon many hours without the Pine agents and their service? And this is where the Void worship tends to lead astray-- as our connections with cultural artifacts and other resources wane, we begin to deny any possibility of help. At the very least, the greatest Pine agent, Christ, then, is there to take our hand(s).

The agent of Pine would point out, though, that the Bible, various songs, and other cultural, religious and historical elements emanating from the Great Pine Agent are also, if not critical, then of extreme importance, and also assistance. What better way to find ourselves than to sing, "Amazing Grace"? What better teaching than to reflect on that given Nicodemus by Jesus?

I call out, then, to the Spruce agent, to he or she so derisive of culture, so against the creation of Venusian libraries. Consider, if nothing else, or no-one else, the final Great Pine Agent, Christ himself, reaching out to assist, asking for your faith. If we cannot find faith in our redeemer, in whom may we place our faith? In extremis, there is no one else.

There is an old saying that, "There are no atheists in foxholes". True, for certain, as a threat of imminent injury or death may drive a man to find his faith. He is made aware of his precarious situation, and realizes the need for a miracle, a Deus Ex Machina, or at the very least for Christ to protect him, concealing his form from his enemies.

Therefore I suggest that the Spruce agents are, indeed, friends mainly in comfort. As long as life is easy, and all is as it should be, we can savor the ice cream of nihilism. And if we have endless cable movies to watch, video games to play-- if we are surrounded by infinite distractions-- then we may begin to lose faith in the Pine, to flirt with the Void, and with Her Monoliths. This is because we feel no immediacy-- indeed, we feel increasingly less of it.

We drift away from the present, lose touch with life and all of its dangers and advantages. The Spruce badge is worn most often by those whose comfort has eclipsed their greatest efforts. They satisfy themselves by consuming sub-element culture-- fast food, bad puns, the cast-off aspects and detritus of our society. Any practiced and experienced agent will tell you, it becomes increasingly difficult to add Pine elements to the Venusian libraries if one is rather busily sucking the Spruce nektar of pleasure.

I'd like to share a few words regarding the subject of sexuality, and especially homosexuality. A good number of the brothers and sisters of the Pine agency are gay. This has a lot to do with a particular overlap. The library on Venus welcomes gay contributions. Additionally, these agents have developed various means of communication and cross-identification which use particular traits of elements. The same kinds of elements to be found on Venus, but on Earth, there are, additionally, chosen "markers" that serve as signals for gay people. They help them to find other gay people, to know what to look for, where to look, etc..

Why is this necessary, you may ask? I assume then, like me, you are not gay. However, for the sake of argument, let's assume you are. After about the third violent rejection from a man who you thought was gay but wasn't, let's say you start to wonder if there is anything particular to look for. And, Bingo-- it just so happens that certain writers, musicians, cultural icons, painters and so forth serve as nexii for gays. Now that you are informed, you are empowered, and can attempt conversation with possible fellows on these subjects, these icons, to establish some common ground. If the person shares, for example, your great love of Divine, Abba and Erasure, that may mean that they are also gay. (Like you are, as we are pretending.) It may NOT mean that, but nothing is sure in this world, and it is quite likely.

Many of these very same elements serve good purpose on Venus, as Venusians do not discriminate, and they would very much like to have material from a culture inclusive of all folks, including the straight AND not straight brothers and sisters of the Pine badge. In fact, I am myself not altogether sure whether bipedal insect folk with rugose cones for heads are gay or straight.

If you are on the Pine path, and your motivation begins to flag, and this could happen to anyone, I suggest that you find your copy of this text, and go over this section. As for your copy, perhaps you should highlight these words.

The Pine agency supplies people with a sense of purpose, where before they might have had none. If you don't like sports, don't drink, aren't a huge fan of television-- and further, if you are not a Spruce agent-- ie you don't go around Voiding things all day, there is a chance you might be a part of what used to be the Tristero. The Pine badge is going to help you. You have abilities, or at least energy, that is remaining unused. The insect-folk of Venus need to use this energy-- need you to use this energy-- in order to supply for materials for their ever-expanding library.

There is no limit to the amount you can contribute-- like any good charity, they will accept up to and including every last bit of material. In fact, really, the more is the merrier. Pine agents who send only a few lines of poetry often get lost in the great cultural sea up there-- unless they are very, very good.

And remember, if your contributions amount to some significance, it may be that a space bug will send a creature down. Someone will show up at your door someday- they will appear bipedal, but something will be a bit off, if you stare. Their hands will be covered with cloth, and parts of their face. You might suspect them to be lepers. Not at all, this is one of the Venusians, and they are visiting you to paint your portrait. They will congratulate you in a faint, metallic, buzzing voice, and ask you to sit still in a chair for about an hour.

For a space bug, that's all it takes is one hour, to paint a person's portrait. These are universally of high quality, as a Pine agent sent Venus the works of the Dutch masters, and they used these works as prototypes for their training.

The special insect-person from Venus will sign the painting with a signature claw-mark, thank you for your time, congratulate you, and vanish with it into a distant field. You will be asked not to wait for the roaring sound emerging soon from that place, though many do.

If you are thinking about submitting pornography-- pornographic elements are interesting to the Venusians, but they are interesting about insomuch as the Venusian's reproduction might, say, be interesting to us. That is, the process is biologically interesting. Human sex does not directly titillate a Venusian, so, as you might guess, from their perception, there is an awful lot written about it, and Venus may or may not need more. You likely won't be rejected for including sexual elements in your contributions, it's just that they will be viewed as relevant, as, say, another rainy day scene or another description of a snow-covered mountain top.

One of the advantages of being an agent is that you get to participate in certain ritual practices. A main example of these is the Late Night Adventure. A late night adventure, or LNA, could be said to be an element-gathering session that takes place after 11 pm.

The LNA began as a garbled transmission from Venus. A netlabel called itself that, over 15 years ago, thereby revealing a latent message-- that the netlabel was a prototype and a plant from Venus, meant to serve as a model for future occurrences. The LNA netlabel was quite

successful and contained some of my more meaningful work of that period-- I was exploring using mathematical formulae to create sequences in dance music.

When LNA disbanded about a decade ago, I realized that I had been secretly appointed to continue its model for element-gathering, establishing a series of LNA events. Often, these were simply for myself, though we all know by now that, then, the Venusians were involved, as well. The events, incidentally, had to be impromptu. Sharing a schedule for an LNA tipped off the dark side agents, who often would show up, just out of range, and take pop-shots at the LNA event. There were a few unlucky Pine agents who became victims of the void attacks from the dark side and had to adjourn early, not completing the LNA in its improvised totality.

It was a habit with such events to finish them listening to the 60-minute version of "Ascent, and Ending", by Brian Eno from his Apollo Soundtracks album, which I have bookmarked on YouTube.

Another ritual was the appreciation of Ludwig Van Beethoven's "Ode To Joy". The ode to joy, part of Beethoven's unfinished 9th symphony, has certain mystical properties. Within its notes, while listening with an open mind and ear, one can experience the totality of the Venusian library plans, including the original mission and what points the way to a denouement in the distant future. This great conclusion, foretold in Ludwig's ode, involves the opening of the library and its many many elements to the Intergalactic community.

When the Venusian library becomes intergalactic, the works of Beethoven and similar agents (such as My Uncle and myself) will be broadcast throughout the cosmos-- accessible, in fact, to

any sentient beings knowing the correct frequency. The library will saturate the many galaxies with continual broadcasts of elements. Some will be simply informative due to their own nature, others will be selected at the request of the cosmic community at large. And when I say at large, this gives the term new meaning. I refer to tens of thousands, even millions of galaxies. It is truly humbling to consider what the Venusians have planned.

Given the project, even in its current state, one can sense its importance. And agents of the Pine have for centuries placed utmost care and attention in the crafting of their elements, planned for Venus. Think, then, about the cosmic opening of the library, and you will begin to perceive why I get into it with my wife T.. I just can't seem to explain the library or anything about it to her-- my mind gets confused. It's a bit as though my connection with Venus gets jammed whenever T. is around. So, she looks at me impatiently, as if to say, "At it again?"

Little does she know or understand the tremendous intergalactic impact my works will have in the universe's sentient community, once the Venusian insect people open their stored elements to the entire cosmos.

The jamming of my brain approaches pain sometimes, especially after having been immersed in the assemblage of many and diverse elements. As a result of it, I can often only muster something basic like, "How are you, Honey? How are you feeling?"

Unfortunately, if I have been deeply enough immersed in the elements, I tend to repeat this question at least twice without realizing it. To T., this is a dead giveaway that all I care about is

whatever strange thing I have going here in my study. Even if it might affect in a positive and conclusive manner the intergalactic community.

There exists in the animal kingdom of earth, miraculously, a form of Pine agent. This is the cat. A first clue that the cat serves the Pine is that it regularly awakens the agent for LNA-events. The cat clearly does this as a prompt from Venus, and also because it is hungry.

Cat agents have been known to sit in the laps of element-gatherers, purring softly, or to accompany them on their mission(s). They rarely if ever reveal their more complete understanding of the Venusian operation. But they know, I tell you they know.

No one can be sure, but it is my theory that cats were programmed with the Venusian plans back in the days of Ancient Egypt, and that the pyramids were devices constructed to aid with this communication. This helps to explain the great reverence for cats in Ancient Egypt-- they were the main recipients of pyramid-transmitted lore from, among other places, Venus.

Many years later, writers such as Mark Twain and H.P. Lovecraft, both prominent Pine agents, glimpsed through revelation some of the powers of cats. They are special creatures that can both preoccupy and deceive people like T., my wife, who regards them with sentiment, while aiding me in various near-psychic ways on my own element-gathering missions.

Lovecraft tells of a grand meeting of cats on the far side of the Moon. As an agent, he wrote in cryptic and humorous ways. Clearly, this notion was a twist on the truth, to protect cats from agents of Spruce. The reality was and always has been that the feline connection is with Venus,

and indeed, it may be that cats are called back there in spirit now and then, to re-establish, strengthen, and fine tune their affiliation with the cause of the Pine agents.

Some Pine agents copiously reward their cat friends with fresh foods, treats, catnip and the like. The amazing thing is that the cat will often make itself aware right at the time before LNAs take place, whether or not it has been given such gifts. T. also likes to give the cats these gifts, but this is mainly to bribe them into periods of physical intimacy, which sometimes is and at other times is not natural for the cat(s).

Incidentally, there is a test you can give your cat, that will reveal a connection with Venus. Cats with the Venusian contact know how to communicate with their eyes. Most people make the mistake that cats communicate by "talking"-- this is mainly a trick they pick up from human beings. That is, when cats make vocal noises, they are consciously imitating people. If you sit with your cat for a while, and are patient, you can have a conversation with its eyes. Just follow his or her blinks and eye contact and you may begin to pick up on the Venusian training.

There are those who might say that I reveal too much about the cause of the Pine agent. That, for an agent, I am a Judas-kisser. I write too much, expose too much. And this is the reason I have been branded mentally ill, like certain other agents, notably PKD. My zeal to enlist people into the Pine badge has been a bit sloppy, even random. With my schizophrenia, there is little holding me back from sharing the many secrets of being an agent. And I take after The Uncle, in that I may even share some of these secrets in written or similar formats, regardless of response.

That is the thing he and I share, that we care about, both the Venusian mission and our elements, and we are known for sharing examples of our works with contemporaries, in hopes to enlist them into what has become of the Tristero. Mind you, he would admit to none of this. Of course not. He is too good, a real professional. I am, I admit, the mentally ill one. The faults of excess are really mine.

There is more, I confess. The Uncle, I know, has had his portrait created for the crystal caves of the Venusian library. And what significance that has now, imagine when the library opens to the intergalactic community. He will be a hero throughout the cosmos. Yet, for myself, even with my many thousands of contributions to the worlds of sound and music, I have yet to receive a visit from the space bug portrait painters. I don't know what more I can do-- I have supplemented my element-gathering with cat pettings, LNA events, and what approaches direct drafting of various folk(s) into the Pine agent cause. Still, no portrait has been painted. Maybe I should paint the world "Hello", on our roof, in giant Pine letters. That might bring the painter bug.

One topic with which I have much experience involves substances and the creation of elements. A substance that works well with Pine agency is coffee, or alternatively tea. Tea can have social implications in some parts of the world, but either drink is good for assembling or transmitting elements. A key is moderation, as too much caffeine causes, at first jitters, then diminished results. My current choice tends to be a nice, robust double espresso poured over ice. It's fresh and has the great coffee taste and aroma, and can be quaffed with rapidity.

Only a very few Pine agents have been able to master the use of alcohol in tandem with element creation. Charles Bukowski was such an agent, though his elements exist now largely

as points of curiosity, on Venus, illustrating the relationship between human cognition and extreme inebriation. Whatever literary merit his stories may well have had is generally eclipsed by the Venusians' knowledge of his drunken state. Alcohol can bring out the passions of an agent, but is also a powerful depressant, and is hardly conducive for accurate element construction. Elements lose their report qualities through alcohol, and become more like impressionistic cave paintings.

Hallucinogenic substances have been used by some agents while element creating. Again there is a risk that the elements become curiosities, and no longer report accurately. For Earthling brain function, we have both medical and psychological texts. We don't need to use fiction to illustrate the quirks and mishaps resulting from the presence of hallucinogens. Huxley's "Doors Of Perception" is, to the Venusians, much like Bukowski's writings-- a work of some merit and interest, which, in truth, should have been written sober and such would have had more to say about that time on Earth. One man's tripping mind is not nearly as powerful as the same man's calculated, clear-headed impressions of the culture he experienced (such as in "Brave New World").

Drugs like cocaine and heroin should certainly be consumed with great caution if at all, as many great agents have been lost through their use. Not only do such drugs occlude accurate reporting, they can cause physical withdrawal, and ultimately, death. There are 2 strange cases in which agents became, essentially, pickled, or preserved, by use of these drugs. These are Hunter Thompson and Bill Burroughs. It is important to note that neither of them lived enjoyable lives, both submitted a number of highly suspect elements to Venus, and both would have

survived for longer and transmitted more clearly without undergoing the aforementioned pickling process. Indeed, such pickling most often simply results in Death, and is not at all worth the risk.

Generally speaking, agents are strange enough folk. They already bypass sensual pleasure in order to accrete material for a library on Venus. They already communicate with cats and embark on Late Night Adventures. These qualities alone are enough to result in the agents as being marked as “eccentric”. Adding substance abuse to the picture only makes things hazier, more questionable. And, indeed, it throws into question the veracity and accuracy of the agents’ elements.

Every Thompson article submitted to the library had to, for example, undergo countless review sessions, through which attempts were made to distill an actual narrative and to ensure that the points made were correct. There are a number of Burroughsian cut-ups that are STILL UNDER REVIEW and have not, nor may ever, pass the Venusian muster. User beware.

As we have written about cave paintings, what about that mystical analogy, “Plato’s Cave”? According to Plato, we can know very little at a particular time, and learning is more like watching shadows play on the back of a cave, emerging from a fire and from figures towards whom our back is turned. The Pine agent seeks, though truth, to alleviate this experience. Let’s say we enter a cave, with the Pine badge as our ally.

First, we may have candles, or even flashlights, as we would be prepared for spelunking. If we saw shadows, we could freely turn and ask their source what was meant, if anything, by their creation. Even finding a bit of fungus, with the help of Pine agency, might result in us either

avoiding the fungus due to its toxicity, caring little at all due to its neutrality, or even picking a morsel or two of the substance if it could be shown in acquired Earth-knowledge to be good and safe to eat.

Far from being sensory-deprived and chained into a dark seat, we are free and able, and can interact with the cave and its inhabitants with due alacrity, yes, indeed, with much foreknowledge.

As far as a philosophy of radical doubt, this philosophy exists, indeed, in the annals of the Venusian library. However, a famous Venusian librarian itself solved the dilemma. A main question was, if a piece of paper were left on a table, in a particular room-- if we were to leave that room, would we know that the paper was still on the table? There were thinkers who doubted radically the human ability to know.

The librarian who solved the problem shifted the analogy. He pointed out that every complete Venusian tome contains a body of elements. We can know that this knowledge exists within the tomes once it is written there. The principle cited was "Occam's Razor".

Every time we open said tome, we observe the same information emblazoned on its metal eaves. Rather than suspecting that such information appeared randomly or was inscribed, each time, by some invisible creature, the Razor-like, or simplest answer, would be that the pages do indeed contain the information-- that this is the case when the book is open or closed, and that we can believe that it will remain the case indefinitely. The librarian's use of Occam's Razor to defeat radical doubt is known, on Venus, as "The Shave That Got The Earth Girl."

I have revealed something here, and it is important. Not only do the space bugs add Earth's elements to their library. They review them. Indeed, this consideration is an important part of their larger duties, and will affect how, when the library is opened to the entire cosmos, affairs will be handled.

Earthlings can be very difficult to interpret. For example, under the moniker of "Christianity", we have both the teachings of Christ, in one element, the emergence of Catholicism, in several others, and the horrible acts of violence in Europe during various periods that happened many centuries later. The rugose insect Pfty-ish was quite confused by these multiple entries, and pointed out their discrepancies to the body of insect librarians. The teachings of Christ, he noted, were quite simple and succinct, and could be summarized in Jesus' statement to Nicodemus, that his main point(s) were to love one's neighbor as oneself and to love God with all of one's heart, mind, soul and body.

Writings telling the story of the Catholic church seem to involve a great plethora of Earthly details and affairs-- meetings, political issues, wars, robes and accoutrements to be worn, and so forth. Pfty-ish found little or no connection between these details and the teachings of Christ, and wondered why they were both attributed to Christianity.

Elements describe a later period of history, in Europe, when Catholics and Protestants murdered one another in large numbers, committing iconoclasts and other acts of destruction. Perusing these elements resulted in Pfty-ish's confusion reaching a peak. Christ's teachings, he himself had catalogued, mention loving one's neighbor as oneself, not murdering one's

neighbor. And wouldn't all parties' love of the great God Jehovah prevent them from doing such harm to one another? What history attributed to Christianity seemed to contradict the very essentials of Christ's teachings.

Sadly, from it all, the rugose insect Pfty-ish, together with his insect fellows, could only conclude that human beings are willful and fickle creatures, and that on Earth, a subject may be well-established, but that that same subject might be misused badly by later generations (or even others of the same generation). It is this element of inconsistency that elevated the Venusians' need for more and more material from Earth. Let's face it, on Earth, red ain't necessarily red. One might be ink, the other blood.

As you are learning, I am a Pine agent whose motivation is to use the Pine badge to help inform. And my enemies are the Spruce agents, those who worship the Void, who suggest that all is for naught. My agency can help prepare a person for life. With it, a person can walk into a room with confidence that most problems should be solvable. And if issues arise, the elements of the Pine agency are there to be consulted and perused.

Granted, there are contradictions in the larger body of Earth elements. The insects have seen, and now understand this. The key is to familiarize oneself with the elements themselves. A Romantic poet might be a good choice for reading, if one was in a particular mood. Whether to choose Coleridge, Wordsworth or Keats might greatly affect one's experience. The true Pine agent, like The Uncle, might know of such things, and understand when to consult the creepy "Rime Of The Ancient Mariner" and when to turn to "Ode On A Grecian Urn".

Speaking of said Urn, another rugose space bug was able to complete its riddle. The male figure, trapped forever in pursuit of the female-- the bug used, what else, but Occam's Razor to suggest that the urn portrays this neverending quest, but that an agent need only consult, say, early novels, or even pornography, and the male would have completed the embrace. The Razor suggested that, as intimacy continues to happen on Earth, and children are still born, the Ode on the Urn only portrayed a limited scope of reality, and a broader scope existed. The seemingly eternal duties of the insects, too, will end one day, or change radically, when they open up their annals to the wider cosmos.

In the service of Truth, I believe I have a connection with the Venusians that goes way back. Yes, I began, formally, to be an agent when called to create and collect my many audio recordings, But, as I look to the past, I was always a bit unusual, always well tailored to be an agent of the Pine badge.

As a young boy, I had a lot of happiness. A bit of a dreamer, I remember wandering around my parents' garden, feeling the sun in my hair, and it was as if a transcendent joy, a peace from above surrounded me. Much of my youth was spent this way, and I became quite prescient about the future's impending troubles, and the many vanities of living in the adult world, where love was so often hidden away or obscured.

When my parents divorced, this only exaggerated my blooming agent abilities. I took to engaging in prolonged reading sessions, and became very precocious, especially in terms of vocabulary. I even tackled adult works such as classics of philosophy and the Bible. I learned

that I did not have a photographic memory, but that my youthful mind was good at picking up new words and phrases, and maintaining a sense of the meaning of the text.

By the time I attended school, I had become a player of mental games. I used processes of deduction to answer questions even when I did not really know the answer. I scried deeply into the minds of those who authored questions, often discovering the purpose(s) behind them, and therefore found myself able to decode them. Because I loved reading, study came naturally, and I took the time, for most of my schooling, to devote enough energy to what I needed to do to do well.

My success in school, up to college, set a solid groundwork for my duties as an agent, and endowed in me the drive and energy to create and/or collect quality elements to appear in the library on Venus.

I am not The Uncle, though, as I did pass through a period of darkness. Like many agents, I experimented with psychoactive substances. This was largely an attempt to "penetrate the veil"-- to find truth beyond all of life's fog and uncertainty. Sadly, my consumption of pot and especially acid not only failed to reveal any static reality beyond, it contributed to the dimming of my intellect, my inner eye.

One of the first things to go was my short term memory. It was very difficult to navigate when I began forgetting where my keys were, what was due for homework. Teachers were nonetheless supportive, and I squeaked by the rest of college. In spite of a great effort to reform and become clean, the damage had been done.

Both parents had witnessed my failures, having seen my Fall from potential agenthood. Both observed my disconnect from the body of thought and ideas I had collected as a young man. We all grieved, and no one grieved more than me, with genuine sadness, feelings of loss, even self-pity.

I did indeed clean up my life, but my mind remained muddled, as though there were rooms inside that I was denied access. This continued for decades, until the Venusians transmitted the message to me that I would need to learn to use computer coding.

The first three months of coding class were brutal, but I felt the fog lift, and steadily began to remember my older ways of thinking. At the age of 46, I developed a new faith in myself, and was able to test my faith by creating codes that functioned. These were kinds of codes that led to the self-creating Generative/Iterative music machine.

One indication that you may be being groomed to serve the Pine badge is if you enjoy spending time in Earth's libraries. They are, of course, merely distant echoes, far inferior to their Venusian counterpart. Still, if you like them, the Venusian mission may seem more natural to you. I remember spending hours in such libraries-- sometimes I would ride my bicycle there, but often I would be dropped off by a parent. The human librarians came to recognize me on sight. I participated in countless summer reading clubs, and developed a set of favorite authors. It was a great experience to sit in a comfortable chair, surrounded by the musky smell of old books, and lose myself in a narrative or two.

Time lost in such narratives is not truly lost, but a preparation, in an oblique sense, for the creation and dissemination of Venusian elements to happen later in life. Written books were made to help enlist people to the Pine agency, and one purpose they serve is as a sort of culling device. Simply to enjoy reading them displays one level of use, and keeps the dark agents preoccupied and inactive. To want to emulate the authors-- this becomes the next step in the Pine agency, the next rung in the ladder.

Earth libraries are like recruiting centers to the Venusians. And it is rumored, and may indeed be true, that if Earthbound Pine agents ever make it to see the crystal caverns on Venus, they might recognize a portrait or two in the gallery, depicting a grade school teacher or favorite Earth librarian. These people served as a veritable backbone of the Venusian collection efforts-- indeed, the Venusian endeavor would have been well nigh impossible without the assistance of certain teachers and librarians.

I am quite confident that my fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Bean, has been portrayed with great honor on Venus. She was an expert at cultivating early elements from younger students. When she caught students reading pre-made elements rather than studying, she refused to take punitive action. I noticed that, whenever I approached Mrs. Bean, though she was in her sixties and in poor health, her eyes clouded with cataracts, her mind was active, and she seemed to be in communication with someone.

In communication, but with whom? It was, of course, with the Venusians, I now know-- and who's to say? From time to time I may have been the subject.

Earth culture has developed, unfortunately, certain processes which are a bane to Venusian element creation and transference. One of these processes is the standardized test. People on this planet wanted to create a singular, fairly automated way of detecting who might be the best at certain things. I tell you, standardized tests really are nothing more than one compromise after another. Many of the best agents fail these tests. They are made to feel inferior for no reason. The building of great elements can be made without knowing mid-level calculus, and there is nothing wrong with relying on spell check when necessary.

When an agent is humbled by such tests, or other evil phenomena such as spelling bees, the universe faces a risk. Their elements may be forever compromised. The agent-to-be might be on his or her way to becoming one of the greatest, a true Da Vinci. But some silly test tells them, their family and school that they are not able.

A true hero agent is able to overcome such trials, and from this process learns a certain perspective-- and this is important to keep in mind. Life is not like a series of questions to be answered. Life, rather, is a great opportunity, singular in its greatness, to live a life of love and to serve the Pine agency. The Spruce agents who invented the SAT were mainly trying to waylay potential Pine agents from their growth, to send them teetering into the Void. Testee beware.

One of the great and magical things about being a Pine agent is that, you might become a fellow agent, yet, we never have to meet, You can know me by my elements, and trust that through them, you can tell the kind of person I am, and the kind of agent I strive to be, In fact, it may be that if you were to directly contact me, the Spruce agency might interfere and send you into a Void. Even if they did not, there is a chance you might not be overly impressed by my

personal appearance-- I being chubby, pale and in my late forties with an unkempt beard. You might have a negative reaction and find it hard to believe that I am indeed the author of such elements as the self-composing code machine, for example.

It is indeed an unfortunate truth that agents tend to suffer from a loss of physical conditioning and surface appeal as they work. Slouched over desks, they gain weight quickly. They are too excited by new ideas to spend time brushing their teeth, not to mention flossing. Their eyes grow tired, prematurely myopic. By their late fifties, most Pine agents appear to be very slowly floating through life. This floating impression may be a result of the many elements which they have created which currently inhabit the library on Venus. They have already become, by that age, greatly invested in things that are not of this Earth. Their gift? Their punishment, as well? They are also no longer of this Earth, in their thoughts, but attached to and occupied with bigger and eventually more cosmic happenings.

What is one thing, one trait most agents of the Pine share? It is, or was, in its day, a great love of fantasy fiction. This affair and interest begins in grade school, and blossoms into torrid heat in teenage years. There is hardly a time of day the young agent-to-be cannot be spotted with a fantasy novel, be it classic or pulp (or both). If you think you have discovered the youth "naked", (without their fantasy novel), look a little more closely. There you can see it-- sticking out from the back pocket of their backpack. There it was the whole time.

This, of course, is no coincidence, but is rather by design, as the design itself, the very Venusian program, is revealed by certain fantasy texts. Though the young agent likely can't explain why, he or she feels they are on a mission of sorts with these books, and the truest and

greatest mission being to uncover the reality of the Venusian library project, and to begin to return contacts with Venus, and indeed to consider amassing elements.

It is suggested that, in Earth's past, there was a period of time when the Pine agency worked without interference from the Spruce badge. This was an idyllic time to be an agent, when elements could peacefully be assembled and shared with Venus, without fear of interference. In fact, during one particular early era, the Pine agency was assumed uniquely correct, and had very little if any opposition. One effect of this was that the larger culture seemed in stride with Pine agency, and society and the building of the Venusian library worked together as a coherent whole.

These were less dangerous times to be an agent. One could simply walk into a resting house, order a meal and drink, and not be questioned about what elements were at hand on which to focus. People, if aware of the Void, saw it as just that, a lack, and therefore did not consider it an option for a cultural future.

There were other points in history where the dark agents seem to have gained supremacy. The Dark Ages, for example, were a clear example of the influence of the Void in history, as Pine agents fled from cities until only a few remained, these being sequestered in Monastic towers.

The growth of culture, and with it the Venusian library, slowed to a near-halt during the Dark Ages. The Venusians had foreseen this dilemma, being great students of intergalactic culture. They maintained what connections they could with the diasporic Monks and worked on reorganizing and dusting their caverns, waiting out the Dark Ages.

Those times were dangerous for Pine agents, who were regarded as outsiders by most people and were often victims of robbery, or, worse, murder. Many connections with Venus were lost, and these had to be re-established during the Renaissance, when Venus was so active in Earthly affairs that it actually sent a small force of insect librarians to the planet, to directly intervene in culture and enlist allies to the Pine cause. By then, the space bugs had grown tired of continually cleaning and re-configuring their library. They wanted, they needed, more material.

Some suggest that Da Vinci himself was a bug from space, others that he was more than one person. Neither of these assumptions are correct. Leonardo Da Vinci was one human who was well in-touch with Venus and who was commissioned to help fill the void in culture left by the Dark Ages. He was of all time perhaps the best Pine agent, the broadest in range, and the most successful. As you might guess, a very large portrait of Da Vinci hangs in the caverns of crystal purple, commemorating an entire branch of elements donated by the man to the library's collection.

The Dark Ages were dark, yes, but what point in history was even darker for the Pine agents? This would be the 1920's, and specifically in the Western World. Einsteinian physics made familiar such terrifying cosmic events as the "Black Hole". Pine agent H.P. Lovecraft, terrified enough of the obvious interference by the dark agency on our culture, made an ardent appeal to the insect librarians on Venus-- he asked them if he could reveal their presence.

His purpose in doing so was to create a surge in popularity for the Pine badge. If the Pine agents could see that their goal(s) were real and palpable, such phenomena as Black Holes and the relativity of all matter might not cause them to drop their efforts in despair. Not all things are relative, after all, and even relativity can be used as another element, another lens to use to find information, to add to the library of Venus.

One result of this tumultuous period was that Lovecraft came to be perceived as the author of the Venusian library theory. Modern culture struggles to accept the premises of the library, and relegates them to the world of fiction. Lovecraft's writing, largely realistic, was itself considered fiction, as otherwise, they would present a universe too terrifying to be considered.

That the Pine agency dealt often with realities that had been branded fiction is no doubt true. Knowing about the insect librarians with rugose cones for heads is enough to loosen the portals of doubt a bit, and admit that there is a lot we really can't know-- and indeed to take back into account at least the subjective or existential realities of many literary phenomena and events.

I hope that you have found my disclosures to be helpful, both in terms of explaining historical and cosmic events, and in terms of ushering you towards a life in service of the Pine badge. It is my hope that you will join me, in Truth and Spirit, by contacting Venus and preparing elements for them to add to their collection.

If you have trouble contacting Venus, please consult a cat.

If I go missing, you may find in my home a metal rod, approximately 1 foot in length. When opened with a living cat's paw and the correct incantation, this rod will emit the epitaph I have written myself. It is to be transmitted to Venus promptly, to be added to my collection of sonic and other works.

Thank you for your time, and best of luck wearing the Pine badge.

--Thomas Park

7.19.2020

